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“Benches.” It runs thus: “others plucked up forms, tables and stalls about the Market-place.” Shakespeare took this hint. But out of it he used only what suited his peculiar purposes. It suited them to add Windows and Benches. An odd word—“Windowes”—to put in, otherwise!

All this to make a funeral pyre for Cæsar, to turn the course of tragedy at its climax with a “ripping” scenic mob-activity, and yet also clear the way for the bare stage, which the battlefield scenes of the remaining Acts require.

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DID BYRON WRITE *A FARRAGO LIBELLI*?

The English Review for August 1915 reprinted, from the probably unique copy in the possession of the late Bertram Dobell, *A Farrago Libelli. A Poem, Chiefly imitated from the First Satire of Juvenal. Printed for Mr. Hatchard, 1806.* This piece Dobell ascribed to Lord Byron, fourteen pages of commentary being devoted to the support of his theory. The world of letters rests under such a variety of indebtedness to Dobell that any opinion of his must be received with respect; but I think it can be shown, not that Byron did not write the satire (to prove such a negative in the absence of positive identification of the real author being impossible), but that we need other proof than Dobell advanced if we are to accept his contention.

Upon the life of no English poet has there beaten so fierce a light as upon Byron's, Shakespeare's alone excepted. *A priori*, therefore, the likelihood is small that any poem of his should lie *perdu* for a century. The chance is lessened when Byron's temperament is considered; it is hardly conceivable that he would write a satire, print it, and suppress it, without a single reference to it appearing in his letters. Dobell compares the suppression of *Fugitive Pieces* (not *Poems*, as he gives the title); but to that case Byron refers six times in his letters (I, 105, 107, 108, 110, 112, 113) and twice in his poems (I, 114, 247). Only evidence of the most unimpeachable kind could overcome the inherent improbability of Dobell's theory. Does he submit such evidence?

Much stress is laid on a long series of parallels between *A Farrago*

and *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, with an occasional echo in other poems by Byron. The total impression may convince a casual reader—the force of such an argument depending largely on the cumulative effect—but, if we examine each parallel in turn (a task rendered difficult by the curious number of misreferences that Dobell gives), the value of the argument almost entirely disappears.

There can be no sort of significance in parallel references to ballads at a time when Scott, Lewis, and others were collecting or composing many, and translations from the German were popular; nor in the quotation of a specially characteristic passage from *Thalaba*; nor in the use of the word “letchers”—sufficiently commonplace and found, if it need be remarked, in the works of Dryden and Churchill, authors studied by Byron and the writer of *A Farrago*, and in fact by all satirists of “the decline.” Scott is alluded to in both satires; but literary satire of the first decade of the last century could not well ignore *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Hayley, too, receives notice; it would have been more remarkable if two writers had *not* agreed in singling out for condemnation the author of *The Triumphs of Temper*. Nor is praise of Pope, the master of all satirists who follow him, noteworthy. And the argument is much overworked when parallel uses of the phrase “Poetry and Prose” are regarded as evidence of identity of authorship. Dobell emphasizes the fact that in two passages, otherwise unlike, the word *him* is italicized. To this the writer of a brief notice in *The Athenaeum* of August 7 (p. 99) has replied that the italicizing is merely an endeavor to stress the demonstrative pronoun as in Latin. This is certainly correct. Both writers use and italicize the word “hell” in the sense of a gambling-house. But the term was widely used just at that time and is italicized because it is slang. Both use italics frequently. But this is merely a survival of eighteenth-century form. In both poems there are strong expressions of dislike of Scotland; a parallel vitiated as argument (even were the resemblance not exceedingly small) by Dobell’s own admission that Byron was using “a common and vulgar accusation.” The author of *A Farrago* tells how at school he declaimed a passage in praise of a statesman; with this Dobell compares Byron’s allusion to the death of Pitt in the poem *On the death of Mr. Fox*. He also notes that Byron learnt to declaim at school. So do most boys; and most are fond of choosing the virtues of

great statesmen for their subject; I have myself listened patiently to dithyrambs upon Mr. Roosevelt. Finally, the untrustworthiness of this method of argument is well illustrated by the importance that Dobell attaches to the fact that in both poems Dryden is called "great" and "careless." "Neither," he writes, "are good or appropriate epithets, and therefore they were unlikely to be used by more than one writer." On the contrary, "great" had become almost the conventional epithet to apply to Dryden. The phrase "great Dryden next" occurs in Addison's *Account of the Best Known English Poets* (line 116); Pope has: "great Dryden's friend" (*Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, line 141); Churchill has (*The Apology*, line 376):

Here let me bend, great Dryden, at thy shrine.

The epithet "careless" is precisely in accord with the received view that Dryden was "less correct" than Pope. Dryden himself calls his verse "unpolished, rugged"; Pope speaks of Dryden's copiousness (*Satires*, v, 213) with evident reference to the comparative carelessness and hence abundance of his writings. In the *Biographia Literaria* (chap. xx) Coleridge uses the very word "careless" to describe part of Dryden's work.

With all respect it must be said that the impression left by this series of parallels (I pass over several even less noteworthy) is chiefly of Dobell's predisposition to find startling and confirmatory resemblances. These are not there.

His other arguments may be summarized and commented upon briefly: (1) The punctuation of *A Farrago* is in several places clumsy; Byron punctuated badly. True; but this is a fault to be found in many a privately printed poem such as *A Farrago* appears to be. (2) At the top of the title-page is an inscription, "From the author," which Dobell says is "a good deal like the early writing of Lord Byron" and seems to bear "a perfect resemblance to that of Lady Byron, his mother." Is it unfair to see in such a judgment a desire to hit the mark at least once in two shots—a good deal like Byron's writing and perfectly resembling his mother's? Has any expert in calligraphy examined the inscription? (3) Much is made of resemblances in cadence and rhythm between *A Farrago* and *English Bards*. It needs, however, but the slightest acquaintance with the satire of the period to realize how stereotyped those cadences that Pope had established had become.

The prosody of *A Farrago* is, in a word, of the hackneyed commonplace sort regnant at the close of the so-called classic period and surviving in only too much of Byron. A similar objection meets Dobell's argument from resemblances of vocabulary; he has neglected to recall the strait limits and hide-bound conventions of the poetic vocabulary of the time, limits narrowed further by the custom of translating Latin authors who supplied many writers with identical phraseology. (4) At the bottom of the first page of *A Farrago* is a note: "Written at Twickenham, 1805." True, there is absolutely no record of Byron's ever having been to the place, but "we may be sure that he would go there," says Dobell complacently, and immediately after he speaks of Byron's visit to Twickenham as though it were an established fact. (5) He finds in Byron's letters two uses of the word "libellus" and one of the word "farrago"—not, be it said, in proximity to each other. Upon this argument I offer no comment. (6) His lack of logic is most clearly shown in an attempt to draw a parallel between *A Farrago* and "Childish Recollections" in *Hours of Idleness*. In the latter poem Byron refers to a bitter personal satire that he had written but had, in a more generous mood, suppressed. This suppressed satire, Dobell argues, was *A Farrago*. There is no personal satire in it; "what I would suggest, however, is that *A Farrago*, as originally written, may have contained the 'deadly blow' which Byron speaks of; but that on his friend's submission the young poet suppressed it, and published his satire without it." Stated baldly this argument amounts to saying that Byron speaks of having written a personal satire; *A Farrago* is not a personal satire; therefore *A Farrago* is the poem to which Byrons refers.

Dobell answers by anticipation two objections that may be advanced against the ascription of the poem to Byron: that he could not have composed and printed such a work without our having some record of the fact, and that the style is too mature for Byron in 1806. To the first he replies that if he has proved that Byron is the author, then "obviously it is useless to argue that he could not have written it." Obviously; but has he established his case? The maturity of style he accounts for by the fact that Byron was following in the footsteps of Juvenal. To me *A Farrago* seems rather the maturity of dulness than the precocious effort of genius; the painstaking effort of some forgotten classicist, not the immediate precursor of *English Bards*. Two further positive objections

to Byron's authorship may be advanced. The enduring interest of *English Bards* lies in its scores of references to the poet's contemporaries; its satire is extremely personal. *A Farrago*, on the other hand, contains hardly one such reference. Secondly, for the model of his satires Byron was more indebted to Gifford than to Pope, as has been abundantly proved by Fuess. *A Farrago* is written by a slavish imitator of Pope; to set down my marginal cross-references would be tedious; any reader can establish them for himself.

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FROSINE'S MARQUISE IN *L'AVARE*

Moliere's indebtedness to *La Belle Plaideuse* of Boisrobert for various incidents of *L'Avare* has been frequently pointed out. Among others Professor Moritz Levi, in his article on "The Sources of *L'Avare*," *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xv, 19 ff., and again, in the introduction to his edition of *L'Avare*, (D. C. Heath & Co), has indicated the most striking points of resemblance. That the influence of the earlier play may serve to explain the *dénouement* suggested by Frosine at the close of the first scene of the fourth act does not appear to me, however, to have been sufficiently stressed.

The passage is a familiar one and need not be quoted. Frosine suggests a scheme for deceiving the miser and winning his consent to the marriage of Cléante and Mariane, by means of a pretended Marquise of Lower Brittany, whose willingness to give Harpagon all of her wealth by marriage contract would induce him to marry her and give up Mariane.

In a note to these lines in his edition, Professor Levi cites the play of Boisrobert for examples of the strange Breton names to which Frosine alludes, but not as a source of the plan itself. W. Knörich, in an article on the "Quellen des *Avare* von Molière," in the *Zeitschrift für Französische Sprache und Literatur*, VIII, 51-67, mentions the fact that this episode is treated at length in *La Belle Plaideuse* and gives quotations showing the comic effect of the use of the queer names, but even he does not lay much stress on the resemblance.